

Sure Is by pixiePique

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, Fluff, Halloween, Reese's Pieces, Telekinesis, Trick or Treating

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Max (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-11-12

Updated: 2017-11-12

Packaged: 2022-04-02 14:48:29

Rating: Not Rated

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,833

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Eleven's first Halloween! Shenanigans, trick-or-treating with her family, and a little telekinesis to make the night interesting.

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“Shit!”

Hopper dropped the spoon he'd been washing, letting it clatter to the floor as he clutched his chest in shock.

El stood there, motionless, her entire body covered in a sheet with two eyeholes.

“Ghost.”

“Yeah, I see that. Holy shit.” He picked up the spoon, trying to slow his breathing.

“Halloween.”

“Sure is.” He turned back to the sink and dropped the spoon in, hiding a quick grin at his little girl's first big outing.

“Trick-or-treat.” The voice was slowly growing less serious than before, picking up a little child-like excitement. It was about time for her, too.

“Yeah.” He smiled fondly, patting the top of the sheet covering his girl. “Yeah, kiddo, trick-or-treat.”

Hopper's tone was a lot more excited than last year, when he had been waiting and gritting his teeth for the moment he'd have to tell his new daughter one more time she couldn't leave the house. This year, there wouldn't be a big, emotional fight, and the kid would get to dress up and go trick-or-treating like a normal kid for the very first time.

Hopper thought he might cry.

“Mike.” He could practically hear that small smile from under the sheet.

“Yep.”

“And Will. And Lucas and Dustin.” She began to bounce on her toes.

“And Max, right?” He asked, a little too innocently.

She said nothing. He rolled his eyes and let out a quick huffing laugh. He’d been caught in his teasing. He dried his hands off and picked her up, hearing her delighted squeal as he spun her around before setting her down again with a kiss pressed to one of the sheet’s eyeholes.

And he wouldn’t lie, even with her new birth certificate locked tight in his filing cabinet and Doc Owens’ promise that she’d be left alone, the full-body coverage ghost costume gave him a little extra peace of mind. No, he didn’t make her wear it. He wasn’t insane, just cautious. She wanted it, okay? She picked it out.

Suddenly, Hop’s doorbell rang. He smiled. It really was the little things, after all this time. El didn’t have to live in a shed anymore, she got to live in Hop’s house with him, and have a doorbell like everyone else. Which, by the incessant ringing and the soft patter of his daughter’s feet down the stairs, meant her friends were here.

Just as he started down the hall, he heard the door slam open and bang against the wall, punctuated by shrieks from her friends, with a “Jesus fuck!” from Dustin, and sighed. Coming down the stairs he saw her pulling off the ghost costume, looking sheepish.

“Kid, what did we talk about with the door?” She turned to him, that little face turning serious, too serious for a kid her age.

“Hands.” She held up her hands as she spoke to show she understood.

“Yes, we use our hands, because we like the walls of this house how they are.” He grinned and pulled her in for a hair ruffle. “I’m not mad, kiddo.” She perked up considerably at this and Max the boys piled into the living room, laughing and making a general racket as they surrounded his girl.

Then Joyce filed in, trailing Nancy, Jonathan, and Steve, none of whom Hop had been expecting. He raised his eyebrows at Joyce, then addressed the teens. “What are you three doing here? No parties this

year?”

All three of them gave him a bit of a weird look. Nancy jerked her head at the group of giggling kids. “Mike.”

Steve nodded, pushing his hands in the pockets of his jeans. “Dustin.” He glanced at the kids and lowered his voice. “No one really wants to let them wander around alone around Halloween anymore.”

Jonathan nodded vigorously, he Joyce both glancing at Will for the seventh time in the last minute.

Hop sent his own glance at El, then nodded. “I get that.” They all shared a chuckle- because what else is there to do with the situation but laugh at it?- and turned to take one last look- and in Jonathan’s case, one last picture- of the kids in their costumes.

All four boys were the ghostbusters for the second year in a row, which might have seemed lame, but they had a good reason for repeating- this year, El was the ghost. They mock-chased her for a few laps around the living room, pointing at her with their- what the hell were those, leaf blowers?- as she screamed and giggled with joy. Steve went into a defensive stance, watching to make sure they didn’t break any vases or bones. Joyce raised an “are-you-going-to-stop-them?” eyebrow at him, but he just chuckled. He’d proofed the house against any mind-power accidents as well as he could, so there was really nothing in the room they could break or hurt themselves on. And he wasn’t about to deny El any amount of harmless fun after her childhood (if you could call it that) and the two years of hiding they had to go through.

After a few minutes of excited chatter, Dustin piped up. “Okay, let’s go! We’re gonna miss out on all the full bars!” Steve snorted and the entire party began shuffling through the door at Hop’s “Alright, let’s move out!” El pulled on her sheet and Hop relaxed a fist he hadn’t even known he’d been clenching. Max pulled on her mask from last year and brandished her fake bloody knife. Hop saw El reflexively turn and stare at it, but then her shoulders relaxed and the moment passed without telekinetic incident. He let out a breath.

Just as they reached a main road, he pulled her slightly towards him

from her spot in the back of the group with gentle hands. "Hey," he smiled. The little ghost looked up at him with the same unreadable expression he probably would have gotten if he'd been able to see her face. "Remember we said no-"

"No powers in public. I remember." She went to turn back but he stopped her with a hand on her shoulder and an expectant look. She sighed and continued. "Not even if scary things jump out at us because of Halloween." He gave her a fond look and kissed the top of her sheet where he thought her forehead might be.

"Okay, kid. Go have fun." The ghost straightened up and ran back to her friends. He saw Mike throw an arm around her shoulder and smiled.

"Hey." Suddenly Joyce was there at his shoulder, giving him a small smile as they watched their kids have fun.

"Hey." Hop smirked back. "Think anything dramatic's gonna happen there?" He jerked his head at where Steve was awkwardly trying to ignore Nancy and Jonathan's laced fingers.

She laughed, her eyes scrunching up in genuine happiness. "No, look, there, Dustin's gonna take care of it."

She pointed to where the curly-haired kid was taking in the situation. He set his mouth in a firm line before shouting "Hey Steve, come check this out!" Steve looked extremely relieved, and happily came back to watch Dustin flick the trap doors of his proton pack for the thousandth time. He stayed with the kids after that, letting Nancy and Jonathan give him increasingly guilt-ridden looks. Steve barely noticed. He really, genuinely seemed to enjoy hanging out with these kids.

"You know, Will tells me Steve comes over to play that, um..." she fumbled for the word- "that dragons game with them sometimes." Joyce leaned over to Hop, who snorted at the news. "Apparently he plays with the baseball bat in the game- with all the nails." The two adults giggled again.

"Can't be helping his case to win back Nancy," Jim's voice cracked

halfway through and their laughs grew louder as Steve was pressured into testing out one of the dustbusters the kids had strapped to their backs.

Finally their giggling died down and Joyce sighed happily. "No, Jonathan's been so happy ever since he and Nancy started dating. Such a sweet girl." Hop nodded in agreement. Joyce's smile turned a bit mischievous. "When do you think Mike will finally ask El out?"

Hop stiffened and Joyce's eyebrows drew together. "Hop, I- I know you're protective of her, but-" she gestured to the group of kids. "Mike's not going to hurt her." She put a hand on his arm. "She's been locked up long enough."

He relaxed, sighing. "I know." He looked down at her, mouth set in a thin line. "It's hard."

She laughed sadly. "I know, Hop." He nodded. She knew better than anyone. "I drove Will everywhere for a year, never let him out of my sight. I-" She stuttered, her hands flying everywhere the way they did when she got agitated. "I get it. But look," she pointed at the laughing group. "It's all gonna work out. They're gonna be fine." He smiled down at her, about to thank her for all the advice, when-

"Trick or treat, wastoids!"

Hop's head flew to see a teenager jump out of the bushes, scaring the living daylights out of a group of kids ahead of them.

Hop started sprinting towards the kids. He was about to scare El-

A little hand started lifting out from under the ghost sheet. She couldn't see-

Suddenly, Nancy glanced back at El and looked panicked. Faster than you could blink she grabbed her purse and smacked the teen right in the face as he passed her. The force of it split the purse wide open, sending lipstick and pens flying as the masked idiot fell to the ground, clutching his face.

"Man, what the hell? It's Halloween." the guy moaned, trying to back away from Nancy.

Fire in her eyes, she threw the shell of her bag at him and screamed “Fuck off!” in his face at the top of her lungs, sending him scrambling away.

Jonathan was looking at her like she hung the moon in the sky as they gathered up her stuff. Steve looked forlorn again, but nobody noticed. The kids crowded around her, shouting about how “badass” that was.

Only Mike and El hung back, him putting a careful arm around her and asking if she was okay. All Hop could do was clench Joyce’s arm tight and take deep breaths, relaxing a little once the ghost nodded her head yes to Mike’s question. The kid placed a little kiss on her head before retracting his arm, just as Hop had done earlier, and Hop felt Joyce nudge him. He couldn’t even blame her for smirking at him, not when he was smiling a little himself.

The rest of the night was okay, except for one incident where a reese’s pieces came floating back into Will’s bag after Dustin stole it. Hop decided to let it go. Only their little group saw anyway, and even if someone else was watching...

A lot of strange things happen on Halloween.